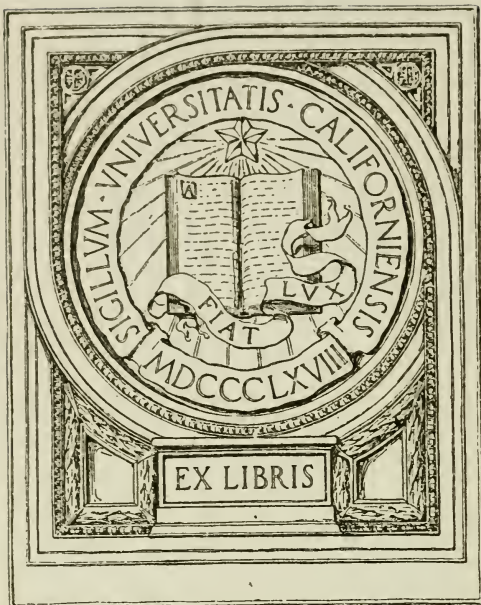


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# HYPSIPYLE

A Paper read to the Northumberland and  
Durham Classical Association in the  
Common Room, University College,  
Durham, on March 15th, 1913

BY

A. H. CRUICKSHANK, M.A.

*Professor of Greek and Classical Literature in the University of Durham*

Oxford

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The references are to Hunt's *Fragmenta Papyracea*, Clarendon Press, 1912; *cf.* also Herwerden's edition (A. Oosthoek, *Trajecti ad Rhenum*, MCMIX) and H. v. Arnim's *Supplementum Euripideum* (Bonn, Marcus & Weber, 1913.)



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PREFATORY NOTE.

My best thanks are due to Dr. Hunt for his kind help and suggestions, and to Dr. J. Morison, of Glasgow, for revising the proof, and for calling my attention to v. Arnim's *Supplementum Euripideum*. V. Arnim has done his reconstruction of the play with admirable spirit, though his ignorance of the Iambic metre is at times curious.

## HYPSIPYLE

My object this afternoon is to give an account of the play of Euripides called *Hypsipyle*: not to deal with the legend of that lady as a whole, or to go into the palaeographical details of the papyri which were discovered at Oxyrhynchus in 1906 by Grenfell and Hunt, so much as to excite your sympathy with the human interest which the masterpieces of Greek literature stir in our minds, not merely because they are literature, but because they take us back to the childhood of the world, when the captive Andromache drew water at the well, and the Queen of Lemnos became the slave of Lycurgus and the nurse of Opheltes.

We will therefore pass rapidly over the early part of Hypsipyle's life, as she appears to us in the first book of Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*, in Ovid's *Heroides*, and in *Valerius Flaccus*. There she is the Queen of Lemnos, an island in the northern Aegean of sinister fame. Twice in the history of Lemnos had hideous massacres taken place.<sup>1</sup> On this, the first, occasion the women, seized by mad jealousy, had slain the men: but Hypsipyle spared her father Thoas and smuggled him out of the country.<sup>2</sup> Apollonius in his epic shows us Hypsipyle shortly after this event receiving Jason and the heroes of the Argo when they stopped at Lemnos on their way to fetch the golden fleece from Colchis. Hypsipyle offers them hospitality, and Jason stays with her for some time, becoming the father of two sons, who appear in the play of Euripides. And Ovid gives us the letter which she writes to Jason, when he has left her and returned to Thessaly with his benefactress Medea.

<sup>1</sup> *Herod.*, vi, 138.

<sup>2</sup> Statius makes Bacchus intervene to save his son.



In the play of Euripides we find Hypsipyle a slave at the palace of King Lycurgus at Nemea, a little town in Argolis between Argos and Corinth,<sup>1</sup> at the top of the pass over which the railway now slowly creeps, famous for its games of old. She had offended the other Lemnian women by refusing to kill her father, and had gone down to the beach, where sailors carried her off and sold her as a slave at Nauplia, the harbour of Argos. The former Queen of Lemnos is now the nurse of Opheltes, the little son of Lycurgus and Eurydice. It is a time of war; the King of Argos, Adrastus, is on his way to Thebes with six other champions to restore the exiled son of Ædipus, Polynices, to his rights, and he must needs pass through Nemea. This is the story which the Latin epic poet, Statius, tells in his *Thebaid*; Hypsipyle appears in her place in the poem, but Statius seems to have followed a different story from that of Euripides, though he has several touches in common.

We are now in a position to read the legend of Hypsipyle as told us by Hyginus.<sup>2</sup> 'The seven leaders who were going to besiege Thebes came to Nemea, where Hypsipyle, the daughter of Thoas, was a slave and nurse to the boy Archemorus, or, as he is also called, Opheltes, son of King Lycus (*sic.*). An oracle had been given to the King that he should not lay the boy down on the ground before he could walk. The seven leaders who were going to Thebes came to Hypsipyle seeking for water, and asked her to show them a spring. She, fearing to lay the child on the ground, observes a deep bed of parsley near the fountain, on which she laid him. While she draws water for them, the serpent who guarded the fountain devoured the child. Adrastus and the others slew the serpent, and begged Lycus to spare Hypsipyle's life, and instituted

<sup>1</sup> Nemea is so near to Corinth, the scene of the *Medea*, that it is necessary to suppose that Euripides is following a different version of the Jason-legend in the *Hypsipyle*. Robert, however, goes too far in supposing Jason to have been killed by the dragon in Colchis. Cf. n. 3, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> C. 74.



funeral games for the boy, which take place every four years; the victors in the Nemean games receive a crown of parsley.'

The legend of Hypsipyle is worth considering, because it shows us how rich is Greek mythology in legends less horrible and less familiar to us than those of the houses of Atreus and Oedipus. The vicissitudes and the happy ending which distinguish the story make it especially suited to the genius of Euripides. The effect which the play as a whole had on its hearers must have been like that which the mellow genius of Shakespeare aimed at in such romantic works as *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*, works in which the author seeks to impress less by epigram than by atmosphere. It is a curious fact also that *Hypsipyle*, like those plays of our great English dramatist, was one of the last creations of the author.<sup>1</sup>

Let us now endeavour to reconstruct the play of *Hypsipyle* as Euripides has given it to us, in a version which differs from its presentation in several other writers, premising that the fragments, though they amount to 300 lines out of 1,700, are very defective in the middle of the play, and that much conjecture throughout is necessary. You will not, I trust, accuse me of ignoring other theories as to the plot if I give you the one which, on weighing the evidence, commends itself most to me.<sup>2</sup>

Hypsipyle appears upon the stage in front of the royal palace, and, as is the custom in the plays of Euripides, tells in a long prologue who she is and what has befallen her. The first lines of the play are preserved to us in the *Frogs* of Aristophanes: they refer to Dionysus, the father of Thoas, the King of Lemnos, and grandfather of

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Hadow has pointed out to me that Photius in his note on the verb κροταλίζειν (*Lexic.*, p. 180) used in the *Hypsipyle*, refers to Euripides as ὁ κωμικός. The word may sound strange in connection with a Tragedian, but Photius may be thinking of the Euripidean plays which have a happy ending.

<sup>2</sup> For example Herwerden thinks that (1) the son spoke the prologue, and (2) was not admitted to the house. He truly says 'micamus in tenebris.'

Hypsipyle. It is clear at once that the old complaint *οὐδὲν πρὸς Διόνυσον* has no bearing on this particular play, and we are prepared at once to expect the ultimate intervention of Dionysus in the affairs of his own family.

Hypsipyle re-enters the palace, and two young men make their appearance, Euneos and Thoas by name: they are the long-lost sons of Hypsipyle by Jason, and they are travelling over the world to discover their mother, bearing with them a precious jewel, 'a golden vine,' which is the proof of their own identity. As they stand before the palace they look up at the pediment above the huge pillars and admire the carvings there, much as Aeneas does at the beginning of the sixth book of the *Aeneid* before the temple of Apollo.<sup>1</sup>

They knock, and when Hypsipyle reappears they ask for a night's lodging. Hypsipyle comes out talking to the baby in her arms; she says his father is away, but that he will come back with many toys, which will delight the baby and put a stop to his complaints. She starts when she sees the young men, and says with a familiar touch of 'irony,' 'How happy is your mother, whoever she was.'<sup>2</sup> She explains that the King, Lycurgus, is away from home, but when the young men offer to seek shelter elsewhere she presses them to stay, and they eventually pass into the palace.

Hypsipyle then sings a monody to the baby, and amuses him first with a mirror and then with a rattle;<sup>3</sup> the passage is one which excited the wrath of Aristophanes. She has no time, she says, now to weave as she did of old in Lemnos: now her task is to sing or do what else she can to please the baby or put him to sleep.

Apparently she puts him down, and the chorus of Nemean women enters. They ask the captive what she is

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also *Ion*, 184. H. v. Arnim thinks that this passage (preserved in Galen. xvii, 1. p. 519) is spoken by Hypsipyle to the baby. <sup>2</sup> Cf. *Ion*, 308.

<sup>3</sup> Herwerden's reconstruction (p. 15) seems to me improbable. V. Arnim thinks that Hypsipyle compares the baby's eyes to a mirror.

doing? Is she sweeping or watering the ground in front of the palace? Or is she singing of the ship *Argo* as usual, or of the golden fleece, or of *Lemnos*; is it a time for this when an *Argive* host is on its way past *Nemea* to *Thebes*, 'the fort of the harp, the work of the hand of *Amphion*'?<sup>1</sup>

*Hypsipyle* replies that her thoughts are ever dwelling on the past; she tells of the heroes of the *Argo*: how *Peleus* made fast the stern cables of the ship, when there was a calm, and *Orpheus* made music standing by the main mast, what time the heroes plied the oar or rested from their toil. She does not take any interest in the political affairs of *Argos*.

The chorus console her by the example of other ladies who had left their homes afar. *Europa* left *Tyre* and had three happy children, and *Io* too had wandered far from *Argos*. They feel certain that her grandfather, *Dionysus*, will come some day and save her.

But *Hypsipyle* refuses all consolation: she says that *Procris*, whom her husband, *Cephalus*, slew by mistake in the hunt, was bewailed: but 'who even with the aid of *Calliope* the muse can bewail me?'

The chorus break into anapaests, to announce that someone is approaching. *Dorian* soldiers are seen: what do they want?

*Amphiaraus* the seer enters with attendants and speaks thus:

AMPHIARAUS. O what a hateful thing is solitude,<sup>2</sup>  
 What time the weary traveller hath need  
 And sees bare fields and lonely habitations  
 Helpless, without a town or guide to tell him  
 Whither to turn; and this is my mishap.  
 How glad am I to see this *Nemean* land  
 Of *Zeus*, how glad to see th' abodes of men!  
 Ho woman! whether slave thou art in charge  
 Of this abode, or free from servitude,

<sup>1</sup> This refers to the legend that while *Amphion* played, the stones obeyed his voice and built the wall of *Thebes* (*Hor.*, *Odes*, iii, 11).

<sup>2</sup> In the MS. *ἐρημία*. The editors amend to *ἐκδημία*.

I ask thee whose this house is, whose the sheep  
That I see grazing in this land of Phlius.

HYPsipYLE. It is the palace of the rich Lycurgus,  
Whom all th' Asopian land hath chosen warder  
Of the God's temple: Zeus they worship here.

AMPHIARAUS. I fain would fill my pitchers with pure water,  
With flowing water fit for sacrifice;  
For that which stands in pools is not so pure,  
And all is muddied by my thirsty host.

HYPsipYLE. Who are you, friends, and from what country  
come ye?

AMPHIARAUS. Argives are we from great Mycenae sprung;  
We cross the frontier, and are fain to offer  
Sacrifice for the armed sons of Danaus.  
Our goal is Cadmus' gate: 'tis Thebes we seek,  
If only, lady, heav'n send us good fortune.

HYPsipYLE. And what your quest, if 'tis allowed to hear it?

AMPHIARAUS. We bring the exile Polynices home.

HYPsipYLE. And who art thou that labourest thus for  
others?

AMPHIARAUS. The seer Amphiarauus, Oicles' son.

Hypsipyle, of course, knows who Amphiarauus is, and then she tells him who she is. He goes on to say how he has been persuaded against his will by his wife to take part in the war. Polynices had given his wife, Eriphyle, a famous necklace, an heirloom in his family, given by Aphrodite to Harmonia at her wedding with Cadmus. As he is a seer he knows that the expedition will fail: still he goes. Hypsipyle offers to bring him to where there is water, and they go off together, she carrying the babe.

While they are away the chorus tell how two exiles, Polynices of Thebes and Tydeus of Aetolia, quarrelled in front of the palace of Adrastus at Argos, whither they had come for shelter, and how the King separated them and took them as his sons-in-law, believing that he was thereby fulfilling an oracle, and how he had promised to restore both to their countries. This chorus is clearly appropriate to the situation, for the expedition which seeks to restore Polynice is at the gates.

After a time Hypsipyle comes back and laments the death of the child, while the chorus draw out the story from her. As far as we can make out he had left the place where she put him, in the desire of picking flowers, and was then slain by the serpent who guarded the fountain.

You will observe that we are reconstructing the play without so far having recourse to a messenger. A Greek play without a messenger? you will say. Why, it is almost like 'Hamlet' with the part of Hamlet omitted. Nevertheless it seems simpler to suppose that Hypsipyle herself reports the story here.<sup>1</sup> She consults with the chorus what to do.

HYPSIPYLE. Dear ladies, how I fear that I must die!

CHORUS. Hast thou no word of hope to give thy friends?

HYPSIPYLE. Flight is the word, if only I knew how.

CHORUS. What hast thou found that braces up the will?

HYPSIPYLE. I fear the fate which the child's death will bring.

CHORUS. Hard-fated one! thou know'st what suffering is!

HYPSIPYLE. I know what suffering is and will avoid it.

CHORUS. Where turn'st thou then? What city will receive thee?

HYPSIPYLE. My feet and zealous thought will settle that.

CHORUS. The frontiers are well guarded on all sides.

HYPSIPYLE. 'Tis so: 'tis truth; still I shall find a way.

CHORUS. Take counsel with us, for we are thy friends.

HYPSIPYLE. What say you if I found a friendly guide?

CHORUS. No one will run a risk to help a slave.

It is possible that Hypsipyle here raised the question whether the young men she had just befriended would help her to escape. It seems, however, probable from what she says later that she decides to tell the Queen what has happened in the hope of disarming her wrath. Accordingly we next find what seems to be a dialogue between the

<sup>1</sup> Robert (Hermes, xlv, 396) argues with much persuasiveness in favour of having a Messenger. He points out that, except the *Cyclops* and *Troades*, every play of Euripides has a Messenger.

Queen Eurydice and the heroine, in which the latter defends herself by saying how fond she was of the child. The Queen, however, condemns her to die for her carelessness. We cannot tell if the dead child is brought on the stage and lamented over by his mother. It would be a pathetic scene, such as Euripides wrote well. In Statius, the King Lycurgus, returns at this point and threatens Hypsipyle's life, but there is no sign of his appearance in the play: indeed, there is no room for him, for as 'all the extant Greek plays could be performed by three actors,'<sup>1</sup> it would be rash to assume that this play required four.

There follows a much mutilated chorus of an anapaestic character, singing the praises of Dionysus in strains which recall the first chorus of the *Bacchae*.<sup>2</sup> No doubt it invokes the God to come to the rescue of his granddaughter. It will be noted that this chorus was also to all appearance appropriate to the action.

What, you will ask, has happened to the two sons of Hypsipyle who were admitted to the palace to spend the night? The experienced playgoer knows that characters do not arrive on the Greek stage, or on any stage, for nothing; what are they going to do? The answer unfortunately must remain uncertain. There was one form of the story in which the sons rescued their mother from death, but there is nothing to show that Euripides adopted that treatment of the plot.<sup>3</sup> All we know is that at the end of the play a recognition has taken place between Hypsipyle and her sons, and that Amphiaras has had something to do with it. It has been conjectured that it came about in this way; that Eurydice, the Queen, invited the two strangers to decide the question of Hypsipyle's punishment, that they decided in favour of putting her to death for her carelessness, and that then, as she was being

<sup>1</sup> Haigh's *Attic Theatre*, p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> *Bacchae*, 142.

<sup>3</sup> *Anthol. Pal.*, iii, 10. cf. however n. i, p. 16.



led off to death, she recalled her past life and disclosed who she was; the one person in the world that the young men wanted to find. Another way in which the sons might find out Hypsipyle would be from conversation with Amphiaraus: indeed, it was difficult for a recognition not to take place: for all they had to do was to come out at the front door, and they would find the Argive army grateful to Hypsipyle for having led them to the fountain, and knowing the name of their guide: they might very naturally come out of the palace on hearing a dispute between those who wished to punish Hypsipyle for her carelessness and those whom she had benefited. Something like this is suggested by Statius' narrative, but we must remember that he could draw on a larger canvas than a Greek playwright.

From the fragments of the next scene which we possess it is clear that Amphiaraus makes a strong and, as far as we can make out, successful effort to save Hypsipyle's life. It must be remembered that Amphiaraus is a prophet, a difficult character for both the poet and the *dramatis personae* to cope with: for a man who knows what is going to happen can ruin any plot, and it must have required much skill for Euripides to preserve in this play the verisimilitude of which he was so fond.

I will now attempt to give you a rendering of a fairly complete passage of sixty lines. Hypsipyle is on her way to death and she implores Amphiaraus to help her: the Queen is present but veiled. Amphiaraus has come back because as a prophet he foresees that Hypsipyle will be in trouble. There is no need, therefore, to suppose that the young men were sent to fetch him.<sup>1</sup>

HYPsipYLE. Thus seemest thou to gratify blind rage  
 Before thou hearest rightly how things chanced.  
 I see thee silent, answering nought I say.  
 I am to blame for the child's death, 'tis true,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Herwerden, p. 10.



But that I killed him, that is false indeed;  
 Killed him! my darling, whom upon my arms  
 I carried, loving him as if my own,  
 A great support to me in all my sorrow.  
 O prow of Argo and the white sea spray,  
 O my twin sons, how foully do I die!  
 O seer, the son of Oicles, this is death:  
 Come, help me, do not see me perish thus  
 Unworthily, for thus hast been my ruin.  
 Come, for thou knowest that I speak the truth:  
 The Queen will listen to thy evidence. [*A pause.*  
*To the Attendants.* Lead on: I see no friend here  
 who will save me;  
 The shame which stayed my flight has helped me not.<sup>1</sup>

AMPHIARAUS. Stay thy hand, Queen, who ledest this poor  
 lady  
 To death: for by thy grace and outward semblance  
 I judge thy birth and mind alike are noble.

HYPsipYLE. Amphiaraus, at thy knees I fall;  
 I pray thee by thy beard and Phoebus' art,  
 For at the very crisis of my life  
 Thou art come, O save me: 'tis for thee I perish.  
 I am to die: thou seest at thy knees  
 The slave who led thy army to the fountain.  
 I know that thou, the just one, wilt act justly:  
 If not, thy fame in Argos and in Greece is lost.  
 O thou that seest the future in the fire  
 Of holy sacrifice, tell the child's fate  
 As thou did'st see it, to the Queen my mistress.  
 She says that I conspired against the house to slay  
 him.

AMPHIARAUS. I have returned because my mind foresaw  
 What thou would'st suffer, now the child is dead.  
 I come to help thee, lady, in thy need,  
 Not force but holiness my argument.  
 Shameful it is to take a benefit  
 And then ungratefully make no return.  
 [*To the Queen.*] Friend, I would speak to thee; unveil  
 thy face:  
 Fear not; all Greece will tell thee of my goodness.  
 For self-restraint hath ever been my wont,  
 And to consider what is excellent.

<sup>1</sup> This is the passage which leads us to suppose that Hypsipyle had resolved to confess the disaster to the Queen. The Greek runs thus: *κενὰ δ' ἐπὶ ῥέσθην ἄρα.* Herwerden takes *ἐπαιδεῖσθαι* = *ἰκετεύειν* and translates: 'frustra ergo imploravi veniam, sive commiserationem.'

Then next hear me, be not in act so hasty :  
 Mistaken acts will aye receive a pardon  
 Except about the life of man or woman.

THE QUEEN. Stranger and neighbour from the land of  
 Argos,

I know thy goodness : all men speak thereof,  
 Else had I never shown my face to thee.  
 Speak if thou wilt : I'll hear thy words, O King,  
 And tell thee all my heart ; it is thy due.

AMPHIARAUS. Lady, thou hast hot wrath for this disaster :  
 I wish to calm thy wrath, I see this woman  
 No clearer than I see the path of right.  
 I tell no lies ; I reverence the God  
 Phœbus, whose sacrificial art is mine.  
 'Twas I persuaded this poor soul to show me  
 The spring, that I might offer for the host  
 A pure libation on the borderland.

Here the passage becomes defective : but Amphiaraus seems to have described the appearance of the serpent and the death of the child, the consternation of the warriors, and the death of the serpent by his bow. He explains to the Queen that the death of Archemorus is, as his name implies, an omen, ' a beginning of fate ' : but an omen not to the Queen so much as to the seven champions who are going up against Thebes, and of whom only one, namely, Adrastus, will return alive. Then follows the most famous passage in the play, some of which is preserved to us in several ancient authors, and which has been translated by Cicero in the Tusculan Disputations.

AMPHIARAUS. This is the truth, O Queen, be sure of that.  
 But listen now to my consoling words.  
 There is no mortal who hath not had sorrow,  
 And buried children and begotten others,  
 And died himself ; we carry earth to earth,  
 And dust to dust : it is the law of nature,  
 And yet we grieve ! Why, life is like a crop  
 Of corn we reap, when harvest time is come.  
 One man must live, another man must die ;  
 Why mourn for that which life makes men<sup>1</sup> go  
 through ?

<sup>1</sup> διεκπερᾶν, cf. Supp. 954. The MS. here is defective, but Stobæus, p. 108, has the passage.

Grant us to give the child fit burial,  
 For we have brought from home whate'er he needs :  
 Our labour will not be in vain : thy sorrows  
 Will benefit the world of men for ever.  
 Archemorus shall have a famous tomb  
 And we will found a contest in his name,  
 And crowns of parsley for the conqueror :  
 All men shall prize the games of Nemea,  
 And thy dear son shall never be forgotten.  
 Come, dry thy tears, and loose thy slave, for she  
 Is guiltless : true, thy suffering has been great,  
 But all ends well ; in this high festival  
 Thou with thy son wilt ever be remembered.

We only possess the beginning of the Queen's answer, but she seems to have relented to the arguments of Amphiaraus. What we have runs something like this :

EURYDICE. My child, this counsel gives thee honour due,  
 And I am bound to reverence Oicles' son.  
 We judge men's deeds by what we know of them,  
 And of the life they lead, or good or bad.  
 'Tis fit that we should trust the chaste and pure,  
 But to have dealings with bad men is wrong.

The last four lines are already known to us from a quotation in an old *Florilegium*.

I have already pointed out that we do not know how the recognition between Hypsipyle and her sons was effected. This is particularly to be deplored, because we possess a long and charming dialogue between the mother and her sons : while she speaks in lyrical metres, they use the more restrained Iambic line.<sup>1</sup>

HYPSIPYLE. The chariot of fate hath hurried me  
 And my children along one road :  
 Backwards and forwards hath destiny  
 Whirled us to fear and the favour of God.  
 Now his anger is gone :  
 And out of the clouds hath the day-star shone.

AMPHIARAUS. This favour that thou hast is due to me,  
 Since thou did'st show a kindness to a stranger.  
 I paid thy debt by zeal for thy two sons.  
 Keep safe thy children ; children, keep your mother ;

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Ion*, 1445.

Farewell: for we must now pursue our road  
And lead the Argive Army on to Thebes.

SON I. Mayest thou be prosperous, friend, for thou art  
worthy.

SON II. Aye, aye, be prosperous. Dearest mother mine,  
How greedily some God hath flouted thee.

HYPSIPYLE. Alas! my son, when I think of the flight  
(If thou knewest it all!) from the Lemnian isle,  
Because I had not the heart to smite  
The old man's head, with the blow of guile.

EUNEOS. Say, did the word go forth to kill my father?

HYPSIPYLE. I shiver e'en now with fright  
As I think of the deed that was done,  
Like Gorgons<sup>1</sup> they slew in the night  
Their bedfellows: pity had none.

EUNEOS. And how did'st thou, the disobedient, flee?

HYPSIPYLE. I went down to the strand  
Where the deep booming breakers roll on to the land,  
The desolate lair of the fowls of the air.

EUNEOS. And then who brought thee hither from that  
place?

HYPSIPYLE. To Nauplia's mart sea-faring folk  
Brought me, and placed me 'neath the yoke  
Of bondage; I was bought and sold,  
A sorry thrall, for Grecian gold.

EUNEOS. Alas! my mother.

HYPSIPYLE. Oh do not groan, the past is gone  
And we are happy now.  
Come tell me, who took care of you?<sup>2</sup>  
How wast thou bred, when I had fled?  
Come tell thy mother how.

EUNEOS. The Argo took us to the Colchian land.<sup>3</sup>

HYPSIPYLE. Away from her that bore you,  
You knew not what before you.

<sup>1</sup> Reading Γοργόνες: M.S. has Γοργάδες which Hesychius interprets 'sea-nymphs,' a meaning unsuitable here. Herwerden's note gives reason for interpreting Γοργάδες as a synonym of Γοργόνες. For the antithesis of γυναῖκες and Γοργόνες, cf. *Eumen.* 48.

<sup>2</sup> Greek ἀλλὰ σὺ πῶς ἐτράφης ὅδε τ' ἐν τίνι χειρί;

<sup>3</sup> This passage is difficult: we should have expected Jason to take his children on his return from Colchis to his Thessalian home Iolcus. And the two words Colchis and Iolcus may have been confused here. (Hunt, Herwerden, Mahaffy read ἐς Ἰωλκὸν πόλιν for ἐς Κόλχων πόλιν).

EUNEOS. Then when our father Jason died, dear mother—

HYPSIPYLE. Ha! by that word my heart is stirred:

When Jason's name I hear, then flows the silent tear.

EUNEOS. Orpheus took me and Thoas here to Thrace.

HYPSIPYLE. What favour did he condescend

To show the orphans of his friend?

EUNEOS. He taught me how to play the Asian harp,

And Thoas he arrayed in warlike gear.

HYPSIPYLE. And how to Lemnos once again

Sped you across th' Aegean main?

EUNEOS. Thoas thy father took his children twain.

HYPSIPYLE. O lives he yet?

EUNEOS. Yes, Bacchus saved his son.

Here the fragment ends; the subsequent appearance of the name Dionysus in the margin on a parallel column leads us to conjecture that in accordance with the favourite practice of Euripides, the God appeared at the end of the play, and arranged the future lot of each character. We may suppose that he told Euneos the son to go and live at Athens, for there was at Athens a family of musicians who traced their descent from Euneos, the son of Hypsipyle, and Euripides is fond of any detail which redounds to the glory of Athens.<sup>1</sup>

Such is a reconstruction of the play as far as the newly-discovered fragments can help us: it is defective, yet it is probably nearer the truth than was Hartung<sup>2</sup> in his reconstruction, written before the papyri were found, and based largely on the story as it is told in Statius' *Thebaid*.

I should like now to deal hastily with one or two points of interest.

(a) First and foremost we must tackle Aristophanes. Whenever Aristophanes fastens on a play of Euripides we may be sure of two things—(1) that it was a new one<sup>3</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Robert (Hermes, xliv. 397) ingeniously suggests that Dionysus appears to compose a quarrel between the two sons of Hypsipyle and the returning Lycurgus.

<sup>2</sup> *Euripides Restitutus*, ii, 430–442 (A.D. 1844).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. however Scholiast on *Frogs*, 53.

(2) that it was a good one. Now in the *Frogs* he fastens on the *Hypsipyle* with great vigour. The *Frogs* was played in 405 B.C. The Scholiast on *Frogs* 55 tells us that the *Hypsipyle*, the *Antiope*, and the *Phoenissae* had all recently appeared, and were fine plays. But we must not therefore infer that they formed a trilogy.

The first three lines of the play are quoted in the *Frogs* 1211. You will remember that Aeschylus is there represented as satirizing the monotony of the prologues of Euripides. He says that he can spoil them all by introducing the words *ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν*, 'he lost an oil flask.' Professor Murray,<sup>1</sup> in his translation of the *Frogs*, believes that the sarcasm is also aimed at the tragic style of Euripides, which is so little elevated that 'prosaic words are quite at home in it.'<sup>2</sup> He points out that an Athenian usually carried a cruse of olive oil about with him, which he was very likely to lose, and goes on to say, 'I can find no object which both ancient Greek and modern Englishman would habitually use and lose except an umbrella.' Consequently the first three lines of the play became the following in his hands:—

E. Dionysus who with wand and fawn-skin dight  
On great Parnassus dances in the light  
Of leaping brands—

A. Found *his* umbrella gone!

(2) When Aeschylus compares the lyric compositions of Euripides with his own there are several hits at the *Hypsipyle*. In the first place he introduces the Muse of Euripides as a sorry-looking female playing not on the lyre, but with the castanets.<sup>3</sup> This may well refer to the woe-begone Hypsipyle and the rattle with which she amuses the baby. When the Muse gets to work she sings an ode made up of bits of the lyrics of Euripides. At line 1243 we have the words, *ίστότονα πηνίσματα*, 'woof

<sup>1</sup> *Athenian Drama*, iii, p. 306.

<sup>2</sup> For 'Comic' usages in this play cf. 62, 5 κωλύει, and 64, col. ii, 81 ὀρνέων.

<sup>3</sup> *Frogs*, 1233.



stretched on the loom,' which recalls the words of Hypsipyle<sup>1</sup> near the beginning. In *Frogs* 1247 οἶνάνθας γάνος ἀμπέλου, 'glory of the vine-tendril,' is said by the Scholiast on Aristophanes to be a parody of the *Hypsipyle*, and in the next line he says the same of the words περίβαλ', ὦ τέκνον, ὠλένας, 'embrace me, my son.' The point in these words which is satirized is the rhythm. The tribrach or anapaest, for the reading with which the glyconic line begins is uncertain, was a metrical experiment which did not commend itself to Aristophanes. The words probably occurred in the recognition scene between Hypsipyle and her sons. A line or two further down Aeschylus says: 'Do you dare to blame my odes when yours are as full of tricks as is the harlot Cyrene?' Here occurs the epithet δωδεκαμήχανον, 'of twelve wiles.' The Scholiast tells us this was a word used in this play, but whether as an epithet of ἄντρον, 'a cave,' or ἄστρον, 'a star,' is uncertain. Both are read in the MSS. If of the former it would refer to the lair of the dragon; if of the latter it is taken to refer to the Sun whose path is in the Zodiac. In any case it must be conceded that the word is an odd one, and that Aristophanes can hardly be blamed for fastening on it.

(3) In the *Frogs*, 64, Dionysus is comparing his love for Euripides to the feeling which his hungry brother Heracles would have for 'pea soup.' And he says ἄρ' ἐκδιδάσκω τὸ σαφές, ἢ 'τέρῃ φράσω; 'Am I telling you my meaning clearly, or shall I put it in some other way?' The Scholiast tells us that the first half of the line comes from the *Hypsipyle*.

(b) The second point for consideration is the famous passage in which Amphiaras consoles Eurydice for the loss of her child: 34 (60) 90-96.<sup>2</sup> It is quoted with approval by Plutarch<sup>3</sup>, Clement of Alexandria<sup>4</sup>, Stobaeus<sup>5</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> *Hypsipyle*, iii, (1) 12.

<sup>2</sup> cf. *Supra*, p. 13.    <sup>3</sup> *Moralia*, 110.    <sup>4</sup> *Strom.* iv, p. 587.    <sup>5</sup> 108.



and Marcus Aurelius<sup>1</sup>: it is translated and defended against Stoic critics by Cicero. Cold and constrained as it may sound to us, it is a typical example of the way in which Euripides lent himself to quotation, a quality which makes his fragments so rich and so interesting; and which partly explains the affection which posterity felt for him.

(c) The perusal of the new discoveries in Egypt reveals to us many new words and many new uses of familiar ones. I will only mention a few of the ἅπαξ λεγόμενα in this play: ἐκγαλνίζω, ἀνοδύρομαι, μηλοβοσκός, μακροπόλος, μονοίκτητος, ἀπομαστιδiosis. We get one more instance of δίδάσκομαι, 'I teach,' used as an equivalent to the active voice<sup>1</sup>: and one more example of ἀναίτιος with three terminations. Homeric forms like ἀγχιάλιοι<sup>2</sup> are found, and the Attic η is not banished from words like ἡδόμενος in choric passages.

(d) I should like to call your attention to a passage characteristic of Euripides' lyrics<sup>3</sup>—

τέκνα τ' ἀνὰ μίαν ὁδὸν  
ἀνάπαλιν ἐτρόχασεν  
ἐπὶ φόβον ἐπὶ  
χάριν ἐλίξας.

Here we get twenty-four short syllables running: we cannot imitate such an effect in English poetry. It must have had a gossamer-like texture very different from the heavy tramp of Aeschylus, and it is one of the things which provoked the comedian's anger.

(e) As might be expected, the play throws light on several other plays of Euripides. As a specimen I will single out (5) 3, l. 31, where Amphiaraus complains that standing water is not διυπετής. The context shows that

<sup>1</sup> vii, 40.

<sup>2</sup> 41 (64), l. 101, cf. Plato Republic p. 421 χείρους δημιουργοὺς διδάζεται. It is used of Orpheus teaching Euneos music, the one person in the world who would not require to engage a music-master for his ward.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Bacchae*, 376, σκιαροκόμοιο (Nauck)

<sup>3</sup> 41, 64, *ad init.*

it must mean 'pure.' By derivation the word means 'fallen from Zeus'; that is to say 'fallen as rain from heaven,' and it is clear that the rain falls as much on lakes as on running streams. Homer uses the word of rivers, of the Spercheus in *Iliad* 16, 176, of the Nile in *Od.*, 4, 477. It may be suggested that as there is no rain in Egypt, the epithet was not an appropriate one for the latter river, and that in the *Odyssey* the word has become a stock epithet of a river. It is easy to say that διπετήρης is one of the Homeric words which later writers misuse.<sup>1</sup> This is one of the places where our students of folk lore should be able to help us. Is the distinction which it is natural to draw between the water of a lake and the water of a river based, either among the Greeks or elsewhere in primitive ideas, on the fact that the one comes from heaven and the other seems to have been always there? In the *Bacchae* 1268 it is obvious that the word being used of the air must mean 'pure.' It is in the passage where Agave begins to see more clearly and to understand what she has done. She says that the air seems to her now λαμπρότερος ἢ πρὶν καὶ διπετέστερος, 'clearer than before and less foggy.' In the *Rhesus*, 1. 43, it is used of the bright lights in the Greek camp before Troy. The use of the word in the *Hypsipyle* is in this respect nearer to Homer in that though it must mean 'pure,' it is at any rate used of water.

One last word as to the papyrus: the play is written on the 'reverse' side of a document which on the 'right' side contained bankers' accounts of the first century A.D. It is supposed that the play was copied on to the back of these accounts a century or so later. The height of the column is 37·1 cm., or about 14½ inches. Specimens of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Sandy's *Bacchae*, 1268 note; and Herodotus, viii, 11, ἑτεραλκέως.

facsimiles will be found in Grenfell and Hunt's *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. 6. The papyrus is much mutilated, discoloured, and worm-eaten. The writing is of a sloping uncial type with occasional use of cursive forms. The copyist has not done his work very well, and emendations are required from time to time.

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